Troop Organizer Handbook

Dear Troop Organizer Volunteers,

Our intent, with this Handbook, is to give you basic information you need to engage with the community to interest families in Girl Scouting and to help connect girls and their families with the Girl Scout Leadership Experience.

We know you have a passion for the benefits of Girl Scouting as well as the fun and other features of Girl Scouting that girls enjoy. We appreciate your interest in reaching out to your community.

Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan seeks to build Girl Scout membership in an environment that has been challenged with population shifts, changes in priorities for school administrators, and time constraints on families and school staff.

Despite such challenges, the Girl Scout experience remains unsurpassed in providing important benefits to girls.

We have a long history of programs designed to develop leadership in girls. We also have research evidence that this programming is effective. At the same time, girls have fun through our programs. Our policies promote safety for girls as they develop courage, confidence and character.

We have a number of great resources available to us, and these help make the Girl Scout experience more effective and consistent, which in turn, can help us sell this experience to families in our communities.

- GSUSA provides sales training to council Recruitment staff and this has helped us give the families in our council the information they need to get the most out of Girl Scouting. We share with you some of the techniques that work for us.
- Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan's online system has made registration and member tracking timely and efficient. You can easily collect information from interested families in an online form and new members can register and choose troops online.
- Rallyhood is a website and app that helps troop leaders manage their troop, plan their meetings, ask caregivers for help using polls and voting, and connect with GSSEM staff members and volunteers in their area. Rallyhood puts program materials at a leaders' fingertips and lets them easily communicate with troop families, making volunteering easier than ever!

The GSSEM Council Recruitment Specialist for your Community (found at www.gssem.org/communities) appreciates any assistance you can give in recruitment events, community events, identifying prospective members and potential volunteers.

- The Recruitment Specialist is available to facilitate your print orders and help you use the registration system.
- Feel welcome to contact the Recruitment Specialist and watch for that Specialist's emails or phone calls to you.
- We provide training for the Troop Organizer role online and in person and a small investment of your time will make your efforts much more effective.

We appreciate your efforts on behalf of Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan!

Troop Organizer Jobs

Troop Organizer

- Attends community events such as expos, fairs, local festivals or school gatherings to interest families in Girl Scouting.
- Distributes information on Girl Scout benefits and events, and invites families to local recruitment events.
- May cover Troop Organization Meetings, helping new troop leaders to communicate to families about troop involvement and getting members registered to the troop.
- May assist at recruitment events; supervising activities for children in attendance, providing first-hand information about volunteering, or helping people register as members.
- Informs GSSEM Recruitment staff of recruiting opportunities at the school
- Encourages girls and their families to become involved in troops or to form new troops in the school
- Helps educate school staff and families about the benefits of Girl Scouting.
- Works with school staff to facilitate Girl Scout events, coordinate meeting approvals, and ensure a Girl Scout presence at school events.
- Ensures that Girl Scouts observe school guidelines and policies.

Why Troop Organizer volunteers are so important

As a Troop Organizer, you are someone with a passion for the fun, features and benefits of Girl Scouting and an interest in reaching out to your community to promote involvement in the Girl Scout Leadership Experience.

Your role is key to Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan (GSSEM) in promoting awareness of Girl Scouting, engaging new adult and girl members and encouraging them to organize troops, or join the Juliette Network.

You can fulfill these roles by promoting and attending school and community events at which we interest and recruit new members, as well as speaking to individuals in the school or community.

The public may not recognize the character development and leadership development benefits of Girl Scouting. Troop Organizer volunteers educate people by sharing information about our mission of developing girls of courage, confidence and character, who make the world a better place.

Troop Organizer Goals

Our goal is to increase Girl Scout membership by helping families understand the unique value offered by Girl Scouting and promoting awareness of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience in the community.

Troop Organizer Activities

The Troop Organizer may promote Girl Scouting and GSSEM, in a number of ways, including:

- Set up a table at a community event and provide promotional material to interest families in Girl Scouting.
- Collect leads from those interested in volunteering or register members.
- Attend Family Information Meetings and other events held by GSSEM recruiting staff to assist with promotion by bringing current scouts, telling inspirational stories about Girl Scout experiences or Girl Scout traditions.
- Attend Troop Organization Meetings, helping new troop leaders promote their troop and assist with additional girl and volunteer registration at the meeting.
- Represent Girl Scouts to the public as you network and meet new people.
- Attend school events, such as open houses and curriculum nights, kindergarten roundups and celebrations and help those interested connect with Girl Scouting.
- Educate school staff on the benefits (including academic benefits) of the Girl Scout experience.
- Identify families with an interest in Girl Scouting and get them connected with a troop.
- Represent Girl Scouts to the public as you network and meet new people.

Communication

Communication with Recruitment Specialists is critical to our taking a coordinated and focused approach to building new membership. The Troop Organizer and Recruitment Specialist share information about:

- Volunteer needs and gaps in membership
- Gaining acceptance in schools or churches
- Grass roots activities and accomplishments
- Obtaining Marketing Materials and promoting events
- Coordinating, but not duplicating efforts
- Ideas for engaging members

Official Volunteer Job Descriptions

Volunteer Position Description: Troop Organizer
Purpose of this Position: To support girls and adults in joining Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan (GSSEM) within a school, organization, or community.
Term of Appointment: Appointed for one year. Eligible for reappointment annually.
Supervised By: Recruitment Specialist

Specific Responsibilities:

Be a Promoter
- Represent Girl Scouts within my school and community by encouraging new membership and supporting existing members.
- Regularly attend school or community events to provide a Girl Scout presence and promote when appropriate.
- Help organize and publicize recruitment meetings using branded flyers, email blasts, and other means.
- Help communicate new developments and opportunities available through Girl Scouting.

Be a Wealth of Knowledge
- Answer school staff and families' questions regarding Girl Scouts and troops at the school.
- Identify grade-level gaps and open troops at the school and report to the Recruitment Specialist.
- Explain Rallyhood as a way to simplify troop leadership and connect with volunteers in their Service Unit.

Be an Organizer
- Hold Troop Organization Meetings with new troop leaders to orient families to Girl Scouting.
- Provide support at Family Information Meetings when available.

Be Engaging
- Encourage families to become involved in Girl Scouting, connecting them to appropriate troops or requesting recruitment efforts to fill age level gaps.
- Encourage qualified adults to serve as volunteers to enable girls to participate.
- Connect families to the appropriate Recruitment Specialist to start a troop.

Requirements:
- Be a registered adult member of GSUSA and support the Girl Scout Mission, Promise, and Law.
- Have a council-approved background check and Troop Organizer Interest form on file with GSSEM.
- Complete training specific to the Troop Organizer position.
- Have no debt owed to GSSEM or its troops/groups.
- Adhere to GSUSA and GSSEM policies, guidelines, standards, and procedures.
- Support and promote the Girl Scout Leadership Experience.
- Serve as a positive example for girls by modeling behaviors such as reliability, respect for others, inclusiveness, and a positive attitude.

Agreement:
I understand that this position is voluntary and that no payment is provided for this service. I also understand that, by not fulfilling the responsibilities or meeting the requirements of this position, I may be released from this volunteer role.

Communications and Sales Basics

Elevator Pitch

At community events, it can be helpful to have a prepared statement to open conversations with people. This helps you share the mission of Girl Scouting right up front in your conversation and interest people who are a good fit for Girl Scouting.

- I'm _____ and I volunteer for Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan.
- I help families who want their girls to develop confidence and leadership ability, try new things and have fun.
- Is that something that would interest you and your girl?

Sales Principles

As a volunteer, you often deal with people who are already sold on Girl Scouting, but some selling and communication techniques can help you answer questions from adults and potential volunteers in ways that encourage Girl Scout participation.

Council Recruitment Staff learn very helpful sales techniques and we hope to make this information available to you in our trainings, to help you communicate with families and promote Girl Scouting.

The following sales concepts can be very helpful when you converse with families or school staff about Girl Scouting.

The Principles of our Sales Process

1. Seek to understand
2. Create trust and be honest
3. Help the customer to buy (join)
4. Discover instead of convince

Listening and Discovery

Selling is 70% listening and 30% talking. Scouting may appeal to families for a wide variety of reasons. It is a good idea to find out what these reasons are and to tell families how Girl Scouts addresses their concerns. Girl Scouting has many, many benefits, but adults will base their decision to join on their own or their girl's specific needs. People do not argue with their own data, so it is important to elicit their information about the problems they seek to solve.

Selling is a process of *discovery* rather than *convincing*. When people are in a sales situation, they have their guard up. We are enthusiastic about Girl Scouts, but if people think they are being pushed, they resist. For this reason, finding out people's concerns and addressing them may work better than simply covering the benefits and features of Girl Scouts.

There are many, many profound benefits of Girl Scouts. Girls want to have fun, but adults may have concerns about character development. We have found that the benefits that most commonly appeal to families are:

- Helping girls maintain their self-confidence and develop leadership ability.
- Helping girls make quality friendships.
- Giving girls the opportunity to explore and discover a variety of activities.
- Helping girls broaden their horizons, try new activities, meet new girls or get outside or away from electronic devices.

Our Product is Not for Everybody

Seek to identify and disqualify those who are not a good fit for Girl Scouting early in the interaction. Put energy into relating to people who are likely to join and avoid selling to those who are not a fit for our product.

If you think about it, someone who is too busy to lead should not be a troop leader. A family seeking a specialized activity for their girl may not be served by Girl Scouting.

We seek volunteers who will devote quality time and leadership, so girls have an enriching experience with Girl Scouting. We hope families will value their experience with Girl Scouts and participate from year to year!

Solving Problems with Girl Scout Benefits
Potential members are most motivated to join when they have a problem they want to solve, and not so motivated by positive benefits of Girl Scouting if those benefits don't address their concern. Present the benefits which matter.

People buy for emotional reasons and support their decisions with reason. Therefore, we need to speak to the potential member's emotional needs and present the information which will support those needs.

Some of the problems Girl Scouting may solve for a family:
- Need for involvement in structured activities outside school.
- Girls who are not making friends at school or in their neighborhood.
- Girls not getting leadership opportunities.
- Girls may be afraid to try new things.
- Girls who are not being exposed to the outdoors or other activities the family considers important.
- Children too involved in electronic games, social media and related activities.
- Children who need more physical activities.
- Girls need a safe place to learn new things.
- The family wants access to wholesome activities for their girls or activities which promote their values.
- Girls who are not fully engaged in school or other interests.
- Adults who want to get more involved in their community.

Girl Scouting can benefit school Administrators too:
- Girl Scouts improves girls' academic performance.
- Increased confidence for girls who participate, especially around middle school.
- Girl Scout awards can help girls as they apply for college and college scholarships.

We are asking for Time as much as (sometimes more than) Money
In order to have a viable troop of Girl Scouts, we need at least two adult leaders who have passed a background check and from three to twelve girl members (this varies with age).

The limitation to involvement in Girl Scouts for most families is time. We can address money issues with financial aid, but adults are busy and may not feel they have time to lead a troop.

When you ask adults their concerns, they often raise whether there is a troop available already (with an existing leader) for their girl to join, or they may wonder whether they have time to run a troop.

You can address these concerns in a few different ways.

The best approach is to ask the adult how much time they would be willing to put into a troop experience. Based on their response, you may want to suggest:
- **The Cooperative Troop** – all parents take on a role, task or leadership of a meeting.
- **Pre-made badge activity plans in Rallyhood** – makes even traditional troop leading easier.
- **Event Calendar** – gives girls things to do without always requiring a great deal of leader involvement.
- **Juliettes** – individual participation or pairing up with a friend to enjoy Girl Scout activities (This option requires adult involvement too).

Highlight the tools (Rallyhood, Troop Support resources, Troop Leader Orientation, Grade Level Essentials Training, Council events, and program materials) which make troop leading easy.

Remind adults who consider leading a troop that they can schedule meetings in whatever way works for them and they can and should ask for the help of other parents. Sharing the work makes it easy for everyone, as long as we meet adult to girl safety ratios with background checked volunteers.

Give Realistic Expectations
It is better to have a family decide up front that Girl Scouting will not work for them than it is to talk them into registering if they will face the frustration of not finding a troop.

It is wise to be honest about the need for adult involvement. If the girl is to be a part of a troop, parents must lead and meet safety ratios. If a girl is a Juliette, parents must be responsible for getting her to events and activities. Give families a realistic idea of what is required.

It takes an adult commitment of time and involvement to support a Girl Scout troop, but the time commitment on the average is not very different from that of other children's activities.

Be honest and allow families to tell you honestly if they are not interested. Honor their decision and spend your energy working with families for whom Girl Scouts is a good fit.

Avoid Judgment
Know that sometimes adults simply want an activity for their girl because they are busy and want her to be constructively occupied. Avoid judging the adults' reasons for involving their girls. It is a reality that many families have one parent on hand, or a non-parent guardian. Some adults are working multiple jobs and are therefore unable to volunteer. We need adult volunteers to form troops, so not every family will find Girl Scouting a good fit for their situation. Allow that to be all right so they feel welcome to participate when the time is right.

Tell Stories
The very best way for a Girl Scout volunteer to present the benefits of Girl Scouting is to share a story illustrating how Girl Scouting helped a girl or girls. Sharing such a story about your girl's experience or a story about the experience of girls in your troop, is a powerful way to engage both the emotional and intellectual interest of families. Stories also hold the listener's attention better than presenting information in other ways.

Present Benefits of Girl Scouting, not features
According to the Girl Scout Research Institute, benefits include:

- **Leadership** – Girls who have Girl Scout experience tend to take on leadership roles in more situations. Girl-led activities help girls learn to take initiative.
- **Success** – Girl Scout alumnae tend to be more successful and have happier lives.
- **Social Safety** – Girl Scouting gives girls a safe place to learn new things, and girls are known to explore and learn more openly when in an all-girl group.
- **Learning by doing** makes learning effective and fun.
- **Girl Scout Programming** covers topics in which girls may need support, such as STEM or Outdoor Activities.
- **Serving the Community** – Many Girl Scout activities orient girls toward making their world a better place and making sustainable positive change.

Using GSSEM Online Systems for Gathering Information or Registration

Collecting Information from Families Interested in Participating
Collect contact information from interested families on our website at gssem.org/interest.

When information is entered on this form, someone from Recruitment will contact the family about their interest and help them get started.

If unsure if a troop is available, or if it is late spring and the troop may not be meeting, encourage interested families to submit their information and work with GSSEM staff to find or start a troop.

If you collect information from interested people on paper lists or sign up sheets, share these with GSSEM Recruitment Staff as soon as possible, so we can follow up and so we can recognize them if they call. It is far more efficient to use a tablet or laptop to collect information on our interest form online.

Registering Members Online at gssem.org
If a family is certain they wish to join, and they have a troop they would like to join, they can register online.

If a family is registering within a troop, complete the registration online, from the www.gssem.org website. Online registration is easy, straightforward, and takes just a few minutes. Register on a phone, an iPad, or other device.

The online registration accepts payment by credit card for national membership dues. Those requesting financial aid, can also request that option on the online registration.

The registration works best in Chrome, so if you encounter difficulties, you may want to recommend opening the website in Chrome.

Registering a Girl Online
Go to www.gssem.org/join and select BE A GIRL SCOUT.

Select FIND TROOPS and then enter your zip code to search for a troop. A list of opportunities will be displayed. You can then select the troop you wish the join from the troop options listed.

Complete the remaining membership information, then pay for the membership. Pay by credit card or request financial aid.

Volunteer Registration
Go to www.gssem.org, scroll down, select VOLUNTEER, then select SIGN ME UP. At the bottom you can choose to join without volunteering (join as an adult member), or you can move on to search for volunteer roles after selecting VOLUNTEER.

The best way to find a troop or other volunteer job is to search by zip code, then scroll to find the volunteer role that interests you.

Pay by credit card or request financial aid. At the end of the process, you will see a message indicating that you will receive an email with next steps.

Searching for Troop Opportunities
Troop number searches can fail if the troop number is not entered precisely or no space before the number. To search by troop, please enter “troop XXXXX” to proceed. Searching by zip eliminates the need for perfect troop number entry. If the zip code search does not work, suggest widening the miles radius of the search.

If for any reason, the troop does not show up on a search, have the registrant, select UNSURE, and for REASON UNSURE enter the school or organization, where they are seeking a troop. GSSEM staff will then be able to make the placement after the registration is complete.

Other Information You May Need as a Volunteer
Volunteer Essentials, on the GSSEM website, is a comprehensive documentation of important Girl Scout policies and procedures at www.gssem.org/ve. To ensure all recruitment activities are safe, please consult the policy section of the Safety Activity Checkpoints at www.gssem.org/safety.

Marketing Materials – Information Pieces and Flyers

GSSEM provides marketing materials which present consistent brand imaging. We ask that you use these materials and do not create your own, as the brand images and layouts will not fit our standards.

On the GSSEM website, there is a Storefront for ordering recruiting materials such as flyers, business cards, troop cards for registering new members, and other materials needed for Troop Organizing events. Orders are fulfilled by Arbor Oakland Printing.

Request login credentials from your community's Recruitment Specialist to access the Arbor Oakland Storefront. You can find it by searching "Arbor Oakland Storefront" or use: http://printgssem.org/dsf.

GSSEM Recruitment Specialists

A list of GSSEM Recruitment Specialists and the Communities to which they are assigned is available on the website, at www.gssem.org/communities.

Training and Communications with GSSEM

Communications
The Recruitment Specialist for your Community will reach out to you monthly and you are welcome to reach out to the Recruiter when you have anything to discuss or questions to ask.

Please keep up with your email from the Recruitment Department. We will send you updates in case you wish to help with recruitment events in the area around you.

The Recruitment Specialist may also contact you to see if you are available for specific school or community events which need coverage.

Training
Please read this handbook and ask questions about the content if necessary.

The Recruitment Specialist for your community will provide a basic overview of the Troop Organizer position to get you started volunteering.

We will also ask you to shadow the Recruitment Specialist at a meeting or two to get a good sense of how conversations go with potential members.

We provide trainings from time to time, via webinar or in person. You are expected to attend one of these every year, so we will give you several options.